Gun & Ammunition Manufacturing

Description: Brief Excerpt from Industry Overview Chapter:

Companies in this industry manufacture small arms and ammunition. Major companies include Alliant Techsystems, Colt, Freedom Group, National Presto, and Smith & Wesson (all based in the US), as well as Beretta (Italy), FN Herstal (Belgium), Glock (Austria), Heckler & Koch (Germany), Izhmash (Russia), Norinco (China), and Taurus (Brazil).

International trade of small arms, parts, accessories, and ammunition is estimated to be worth $8.5 billion, according to Small Arms Survey. The US is the largest importer and exporter of small arms. Other major exporters include Germany, Italy, Brazil, and Switzerland; the UK, Canada, Germany, and Australia are among the leading importers.

The US gun and ammunition manufacturing industry includes about 400 companies with combined annual revenue of about $10 billion.

Competitive Landscape

Demand is driven partly by hunters, gun enthusiasts, and weapon upgrades by police departments. The profitability of individual companies is closely linked to marketing. Large companies have economies of scale in purchasing. Small companies can compete effectively by producing premium-priced high-quality or decorative guns. The industry is highly concentrated.

Products, Operations & Technology

Firearms and accessories account for about 60 percent of industry revenue; ammunition accounts for about 40 percent. The US industry produces more than 8 million guns per year: about 50 percent are pistols and revolvers; about 35 percent are rifles, and about 15 percent are shotguns and other firearms. Within a category, a company may make guns of different caliber and style.

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